



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Performing Arts and Technology**

**High School K507**

**400 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11207**

**Principal: Franklin Encarnación**

**Date of review: April 1, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Musa Shama**

## The School Context

Performing Arts and Technology is a high school with 392 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 80% Black, 18% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 43% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 81.9%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports and feedback that promotes a culture for learning that consistently communicates these expectations.

### Impact

Expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness have resulted in systems and structures for support, accountability, and communication.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career by ensuring that all students receive course syllabi and class contracts that state academic policy. Students and parents receive a guide at the beginning of the year explaining the requirements for graduation. The Skedula system is used to track and monitor student progress as well generate progress reports that help parents and students to be aware of academic progress. Students stated that they discuss important information regarding student progress, student attendance, graduation requirements and that the principal celebrates student accomplishments in monthly town hall meetings.
- The school offers Advanced Placement courses in English, Math, Science, and Spanish. Additionally, the school has a partnership with the Advance Placement (AP) Expansion program that provides targeted support and tutoring for AP students and professional development for teachers during Saturday sessions. The school has organized college-related activities including college trips, college fairs, and workshops with college representatives and has partnered with the CUNY program “At Home In College” that awards students with coursework that exempts them from remedial courses at CUNY.
- On the first day of the school year, the message regarding teacher expectations is delivered via the teacher handbook that documents the expectations around professionalism and pedagogy. Systems of looking at observation data, teacher feedback and teacher voice, have led to professional learning opportunities to support teacher practice. The principal has created a professional development (PD) committee that provide teacher voice in the areas faculty want professional learning opportunities. In addition, the instructional leadership team conducts inter-visitation utilizing the Danielson rubric to inform areas where faculty needs additional support. The principal stated that they model strategies for teachers during PD to help faculty incorporate these strategies.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

Teaching practices across classrooms are beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best to engage students in high levels of student thinking and participation informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

### Impact

Student work products and discussions reflected uneven levels of student thinking and participation across levels leading to missed opportunities to for students taking ownership in their own learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have a belief that students learn best when working in groups, exchanging ideas and being productive. This was clearly exemplified in a U.S. History lesson in grade eleven class with the Aim; “How can we use documents to argue in support or against Truman’s decision to drop the Atomic Bomb?” Students were asked to read to statements President Harry S. Truman made, analyze them and record their thoughts on sticky notes. Students discussed their notes and worked collaboratively to provide evidence to support Truman’s decision to drop the Atomic Bomb by populating a graphic organizer. Students used accountable talk to agree and disagree with peers as the teacher facilitated the conversation eliciting the salient information from students. The high level of student engagement led to all students having voice and ownership in the lesson. However, this level of student participation was not seen across all classrooms. For example, in an Algebra class, with the aim; “How do we find the probability of events involving replacement?” the teacher attempted to facilitate classroom discussion by asking questions such as “How do we find the probability of events involving replacements?” only to have students call out answers instead of engaging in the school wide focus of accountable talk.
- In a tenth grade English language arts class, a lesson with the Aim; “How do we organize and analyze specific textual evidence?” students were observed preparing to write arguments to support claims. The teacher provided students with a paragraph of text and asked them to circle the topic sentence, underline the evidence once, and underline the analysis twice. The teacher used this activity to establish a strategy represented by the acronym T.E.A. (topic sentence, evidence, analysis) before requiring students to use this in a task. This activity promoted high levels of student thinking and participation. The teacher moved about the room, ensuring that students were able to identify requested elements and conferencing with students and asking them questions that required that they defend their use of evidence selected. However, in an eleventh grade English language arts (ELA) class with the aim; “How does peer-assessment improve our writing? The lesson opened with “What are some strategies a writer can use to improve their writing?” which resulted in two students responses. Although students used accountable talk stems, the dialogue resulted in a teacher- to- student discussion. The lesson transitioned into a PowerPoint with much of the information given to students as students sat silently without taking notes.
- Accountable talk stems were taped to desks across classrooms. Although the practice of having students use the prompts were observed, it has yet to result in a school-wide adoption of this practice.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts and are refined through the use of analyzing student work and data.

### Impact

Purposeful decisions have been made to build coherence and ensure that a diversity of learners have access to curricula and tasks and, are cognitively engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- At the start of the school year, faculty and school leaders engaged in the evaluation of curricula alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards. They analyzed examples of units aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards on the EngageNY website and other New York State Department of Education resources to inform their work with curriculum maps. In keeping the school's instructional focus of "students will effectively use domain specific and academic vocabulary in discussions and writing. During class activities they will also cite textual evidence and use analytical thinking to clearly justify their conclusions." the faculty started a process of revising curriculum maps using protocols that included looking at student work and data to make revisions to their curriculum. The school also ensured that their curriculum included the instructional shifts and aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. There is now a focus on writing across content areas so that students are engaged in citing textual evidence, utilizing academic vocabulary, and engage in text based discussions. Review of curriculum maps in English, social studies, and science evidenced this focus. Teachers stated that they were in the process of developing and administering performance tasks aligned to Common Core. The school is currently discussing using protocols to examine student work products to conduct gap analysis to refine curricula.
- Teachers administered Common Core aligned performance tasks, and engaged in looking at student work protocols and item analysis to inform curricula refinements to see where they could incorporate additional opportunities for students to engage in rigorous writing and activities to cite textual evidence, utilize content specific vocabulary, and produce written tasks that articulate their thinking. Teachers in the English language arts team describe the outcomes of creating vertical coherence by scaffolding research and writing skills to develop college level skills as student progressed towards graduation.
- Curricula reviewed demonstrated a coherent approach to unit planning incorporating a common unit plan template based on the Understand by Design Model. Unit plans across subject areas referenced Common Core learning standards (CCLS) and lesson plans also referenced Common Core learning standards covered in that lesson.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use and create common assessments and rubrics to determine student progress toward goals.

### **Impact**

Assessments provide actionable feedback to students and teachers and result in adjustment to curricula and instruction for increased student achievement.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school uses a color-coded spreadsheet for student data and scholarship which highlights student credits by subject area and includes Regents scores. This data is reviewed by department and grade teams and tracked both vertically and horizontally in coordinated cycles of data review during strategic times in the academic school year to understand student progress towards meeting goals. Data is used to identify areas of need for additional support as well as targeted interventions during Saturday school and after school tutoring.
- Common assessments are given to determine student progress in order to meet school wide goals. For example, mock Regents exams have been developed for all courses terminating in Regents to identify areas that need to be retaught. Teachers across subjects utilize CastleLearning.com software create online assessments for Units covered and utilize the detailed reports generated on student understanding on topics to inform areas that need to be retaught. Teachers conduct item analysis and use this in the redevelopment and refinement of unit plans and lesson plans.
- Across subject areas, it was evident that rubrics were being used to provide actionable feedback to students. Student work displays in the hallways and classrooms were accompanied with a rubric as well as detailed written feedback. For example, in an English language arts task that utilized the New York City Performance Assessment Common Rubric, feedback stated, "When composing your claim, your reader should know your exact position, you don't want any confusion." This comment aligned to the indicated area of the rubric the teacher was referring to. When asked if they received detailed feedback on their tasks, students responded in the affirmative stating that teachers in all their classes told them what they had to do in order to improve their work and their grades in classes.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and builds leadership capacity in teachers.

**Impact**

Teacher voice in key decisions impacts student learning across the school as well as strengthens the instructional capacity of teachers.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Time has been allocated for departments and grade teams to meet regularly during the week to collaborate. Teachers highlighted the development of Common Core aligned tasks, reviewing student assessment data, analyzing student work products, parental outreach, curriculum development and sharing instructional practices as the type of work they engage in when they meet. Teachers from each subject area comprise a consultation committee that meets monthly with the principal to discuss areas that impact teaching and learning. This consultation committee informs the agendas set for team meetings.
- The principal facilitates distributed leadership structures so that teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. For example, the Instructional Leadership Team supports teacher pedagogy by providing non-evaluative feedback based on instructional walkthroughs of their colleagues. The Attendance Team analyzes trends and patterns in attendance data, and implements strategies to address students in need of interventions and guidance. The Professional Development team plans the Monday Professional Development sessions based on the input of faculty and the expressed needs of teachers. For example, strategies on writing across the curriculum and content specific writing strategies were areas that teachers identified.
- Teachers in the English language arts department articulated a cohesive approach to developing curricula vertically based on looking at student work and analyzing student data to introduce certain skills across the grade levels. For example, eleventh grade teachers noticed a need for having students solidly use Modern Language Association (MLA) citation for citing textual evidence in research papers. Working in vertical teams, the ELA teachers have introduced MLA citation in the ninth grade with tasks embedded throughout the year. This skill is reinforced in tenth grade and strengthened in eleventh grade so that students are prepared to engage in college level work by the twelfth grade.